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Office of Emergency Services

Flathead County, Montana

Kalispell, Montana

Interoperable Communications
Functional Exercise
Initial Planning Meeting

October 25, 2013

Homeland Security

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Office of Emergency Communications / Border Interoperable Demonstration Technical Assistance Program

Controlled Unclassified Information

Introduction to the OEC/BIDTAP Exercise Process

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OEC/BIDTAP: Who We Are

- Composed of operations specialists & engineers with professional first responder experience in emergency communications for:

  - Law Enforcement
  - Fire / EMS
  - Emergency Management

  - Dispatch/PSAP
  - Search & Rescue
  - Military

- Specialize in working with public safety professionals

- Facilitate the design and execution of exercises to investigate public safety communications interoperability in the area

- Assist the working group with solutions to identified communication gaps related to training, governance, technology, SOPs, etc.

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- Utilize discussion/operations-based exercises to provide a gap analysis of current communications systems, procedures, training, and policies

  - Consistent with Homeland Security Exercise & Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

  - Driven by regional communications users

  - Tailored to the specific communications needs of the region

  - Provides an open and safe arena to address communications successes and barriers alike

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Exercise Goals & Objectives

- Exercise the communications policies, procedures, plans, assets, and capabilities used by regional agencies in response to a multi-jurisdictional incident

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- Improve day-to-day interoperable emergency communications among local, state, tribal, and federal entities as well as international partners along and across international borders

- Improve interoperable emergency communications among emergency response providers responding to threats and natural disasters on the border

- Facilitate interoperable communications among emergency response providers in border communities of varying population densities.

- Enhance utilization of Montana's mutual aid channel for improved cross-border communications (Activity 1)

- Improve interagency voice and data (IV&D) capability in remote border areas (Activity 2)

- Increase trunking and conventional radio coverage along the border (Activity 3)

- Demonstrate an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) pilot system (Activity 4)

- Initiate cross-border security training and exercises (Activity 5)

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Enhance utilization of Montana's mutual aid channel for improved cross-border communications

- Method
  - Utilize Montana's BLUE' mutual aid channel (National VLAW31) for mutual U.S./Canadian border operations at or within 10km of the border.
  - Implement new narrowband P-25 base stations at 15 licensed locations in the Northern Tier.
  - Provide interoperability solutions between USBP Havre Sector and local/state responders
- Solution
  - Pursue an agreement with the State Department to allow improved cross-border coordination and response with Canadian partners
  - Utilize newly purchased radios to provide interoperability with USBP Havre Sector

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Improve interagency voice and data (IV&D) capability in remote border areas

- ## Method
  - Provide data connections to new and existing communications sites to a data switch at the integrated voice and mobile data radio system in Helena
- ## Solution
  - Integrated P25 data technology will provide data access along the border where either none exist today or where commercial services are unreliable.
  - Distribute 40 mobile data computers to 11 counties and 1 tribal jurisdiction along the border as a pilot project.

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Increase trunking and conventional radio coverage along the border

- Method
  - Upgrade three communications sites with digital, integrated voice and mobile data communications
- Solution
  - Install a T-1 line to connect the Opheim site in Valley County with the Scobey site, in Daniels County in order to connect the Opheim site to the rest of the NTIC microwave backbone. In addition, integrated voice and data radio equipment is needed at the site as well as a few small upgrades.
  - Install integrated voice and data radio equipment and digital microwave at both the Marion site in Flathead County and a Bears Paw Mountains site in Blaine County.

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Demonstrate an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) pilot system

- Method
  - Pilot an Automatic Vehicle Location System (AVL)
- Solution
  - Configure GPS-equipped portable and mobile radios to transmit their geographical coordinates at pre-programmed intervals, on demand and in case of an emergency. This grant application proposes a pilot project in Hill and Blaine Counties to determine if the technology is cost effective.

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Initiate cross-border security training and exercises

- Method
  - Plan, design and initiate cross-border security training and exercises

- Solution
  - Provide cross-border security training and exercises that can be used to measure the effectiveness of the grant activities and produce modifications in standard operating procedures/agreements. The goal of this activity is to demonstrate the integration of the requested technologies and illustrate how local border agencies could use them to improve voice and data communications and integration.

Scenario

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Future Dates: FPC, Exercise, AAC

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- Mid Planning Meeting
  - 15 January 2014, Kalispell, MT
- Final Planning Meeting
  - 19 February 2014, Kalispell, MT
- Functional Exercise
  - TBD - March
- After Action Meeting
  - TBD (normally 4-6 weeks after the Exercise)

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QUESTIONS?

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